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No. 414

HOME.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

Without, the night is chill and cold;

Within the fire is bright,

And shelter red home's happy fold

We dread no storm to-night.

We see the white snow falling fast,

We hear the wild winds shriek,

But listening to the mournful blast,

A smile is on each cheek.

But, ah, this dreary winter night,

How many wanderers roam,

Who shiver at the wind's delight

And know no place for home.

God pity all the homeless ones,

Wherever they may roam,

And grant them, all their wanderings done,

A place in God's dear home.

Happy Jack and Pard;

OR,

The White Chief of the Sioux.

A ROMANCE OF SPORTS AND PERILS OF POST AND PLAIN.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

CHAPTER I.

A FRONTIER FESTIVAL.

"MAKES a feller most sorry for the old Indian fashion, eh, pard?" I can't say as I ever hankered after the "winnow critter"—they're mostly naturally bad medicine, and they've got many lodges big enough to hold them an' luck, too, to my notion; but when I fast lay eyes on her, I had to fight mighty hard inside myself to keep from snatchin' her up an' makin' a tail-on-end race for it—I did say!"

"There's another man who thinks much the same, or his eyes speak false," quietly remarked the young man addressed, with a slight nod toward the small, flag-draped platform or pavilion. "He must be a new-comer, for I never saw him before."

"They ain't many men as care to see him twice. Take a good squar' look an' see what you kin make out from his face."

The speakers—who are destined to figure prominently in this chronicle—were standing a little apart from the main gathering, and both were men who would attract attention in any crowd, though strong contrasts in nearly every respect.

The first speaker was scarcely of medium height; his limbs were small, but admirably rounded, and though at first glance he seemed almost effeminate, his strength, activity and wonderful skill in almost every species of athletics had long since passed into a proverb. His features were clear-cut and regular, and would have been fairly handsome only for the high cheekbones. His face was smooth and beardless, though the hair of his head was unusually heavy, falling in straight black masses below his shoulders. His eyes, though rather small, were wonderfully bright and keen, and few men could meet them fairly without an uncomfortable feeling of being read through and through.

His garments were almost severely plain, of Indian tanned buck-skin, and minus all the fringes and beadings most men of his class are so fond of. Even his weapons were unornamented. Yet one object about him shone and sparkled in the sunlight: a beautifully-embroidered and ornamented pouch hung upon his breast—a "medicine-sack."

Such was William—or "BILL COMSTOCK," the scout and guide. His career, though briefer, was no less famous than that of Wild Bill or Buffalo Bill, and to this day many a rough voice grows soft, many a hard eye dims, as the memory of the true-hearted scout is recalled to mind. "True as steel to a friend—bitter as death to an enemy, he died in harness, nobly performing his duty; and now lies in a nameless grave. Peace to his ashes!"

His companion known far and wide as "Happy Jack" was rising six feet, broad-shouldered full-chested, with a round, compact waist, swelling hips and long limbs; a model of health and symmetry. His complexion was fair, his features almost classically regular, his eyes large and deep blue. A heavy mustache shaded his lips, while a magnificent chevelure hung in yellow curls to his shoulders. His dress, like that of his partner, was mainly of buck-skin, and bore traces of recent hard riding and rough living.

"Unless my eyes deceive me," he said, after a steady gaze in the direction indicated by Comstock, "that man is what you rarely see—a brave tyrant! God help the man—or woman—whose only hope is in his mercy!"

"I knowed you'd set it to laffin' the scout, softly. "That's Cap'n Stone's way of the—tho' he led his men to get him changed to this riment. I don't know he'd a' lived through the next skirmish—indeed, the boys didn't make no secret of it, but said right out that he'd die from ahind, the very first chaine that come."

"He doesn't look like a man who would run from even such a danger," thoughtfully said Happy Jack.

"No more he would—without a fa' cause," grinned Comstock, nodding toward the pavilion.

"To do him justice, they ain't more daredevil men, nur a better Injun-fighter than him. But *thar's* the little gal kin take him into camp!"

"I feel sorry for her," was the scout's only reply.

The subject of this brief conversation was seated beside a lady near the upper end of the pavilion. A tall, well proportioned, dark and handsome, a finely-educated man with rare conversational powers. Captain Lawrence Stone was laying himself out to please the young lady beside him with an interest and ardor that he made no attempt to disguise from the eyes of those around. Indeed, so impressive did his air become that the lady arose and hastily approached the edge of the pavilion nearest the crowd. Captain Stone followed, a hot flush passing swiftly across his brow.

The unpolished though sincere praise of the scout had not been unfounded. Kate Markham, daughter of the colonel commanding, was indeed a beautiful woman. That she was barely up to



"That's enough, pard!" cried Happy Jack. "You mean well, but I don't need any man to fight my battles."

in the middle height, that her form was full and admirably symmetrical without being too plump, that she was a perfect brunette, with jetty-black hair, a complexion of copper, and large, brilliant eyes; all this is easily said, but the words give only a faint and unsatisfactory idea of the reality. With each passing mood she seemed quite a different person—alike only in being charming, bewitching in all.

The hot blood mantled her cheek as she felt the presence of the captain at her elbow, and as though dreading what he might intend saying, she hastily uttered:

"Pray—who is that gentleman talking to father?"

"Gentleman?" echoed Captain Stone, with a scarcely-disguised sneer. "Ah, perhaps you mean yonder fellow with the long hair?"

"I mean the gentleman with the golden curls—yes," replied Kate, with a provoking emphasis.

"That is Happy Jack, as men call him, a sort of scout, or camp-follower, I believe. I fear though, Miss Kate, that few would recognize him by description."

"Indeed! after such a proof of your blindness, I shall think twice before believing any more of your pretty speeches. Without exception he is the handsomest man I have seen in a year—and I'm going to ask papa for an introduction."

With a mischievous laugh, Kate Markham ran lightly down the broad steps and approached her parent; but if she really had such an idea, it was frustrated. With a military salute the scout turned away and rejoined his partner.

Colonel Markham greeted his petted offspring—child with a smile, and the smile betwixt the eyes, all good-will and love for his son.

"It's for her, pard. She came out here a somewher in the States, I reckon, when she's bin to school, or sick like. She come out here a week ago, an' the old man he 'lowed he show how proud he was, by givin' a ginevine prairie circus. I reckon everybody an' his yaller dog 'll be here. They's money in it, too, lettin' alone the fun. The old man don't often git off in his reg'lar beat, but when he do, he just spreads himself wide open—your hear me?" and the enthusiastic scout hurried off his friend to view the various prizes which were to be awarded to the victors in the coming sports.

For the most part these were particularly appropriate, considering the number of contestants; a beautiful, well-ribbed rifle, a brace of revolvers, a sabre, silver-mounted saddle and horse furniture, together with smaller prizes of money, ammunition, etc. While examining these, the two scouts were suddenly separated as two officers pressed rudely between them. The taller one pointed out the saddle, saying in a clear tone:

"I mean to carry off that prize, and as a proof that I mean what I say, I am ready to wager one hundred dollars with any gentleman—"

"Money talks," quickly uttered Happy Jack, shaking off the hand of his friend and racing the officer. "I accept your wager, Captain Stone."

"And who may you be?" insolently demanded the officer, eying the scout from head to foot.

"I said any gentleman—"

"I claim to be one, sir, as I will cheerfully

convince you at any time or place you may choose to name. Meanwhile, if you have any doubts, you can settle them by one word with Colonel Markham. Here is the money—cover it, over there you are talking just for the sake of hearing your own voice!"

"You have said more than enough," replied Captain Stone, in a voice that trembled despite his iron nerves. "Lieutenant Blake, will you do us the honor to hold stakes? Thanks. I trust you are satisfied?" he added, abruptly turning to Happy Jack.

"Perfectly," bowed the scout.

"I hope you may be able to say as much by this time to-morrow," and with a little laugh the captain strode away toward the pavilion.

"You've stirred up an ugly devil, pard," earnestly said Comstock, as they turned away from the little crowd. "He's giv' his rattle; he'll wait long afore strikin'!"

"I mean the other fellow, the place he would have had time to do either," was the quiet reply. "He did not crowd us like that for nothing. I can't imagine his reason, but I feel that he came here simply to pick a quarrel."

"I reckon he couldn't come to a better place gettin' the full wuth o' his money," grinned Comstock.

"I'll do my best to satisfy him, at least. But now—about this bet; what is the saddle offered for?"

"The old trick—you remember the fun we had down Taos way? Pluckin' the cock—el gallo."

"Old 'Paint' will do, then," muttered the judge to his cronies, as the signal to begin the game was given. "It's for his pard. He'll run aginst a mele."

"He'll need a fast an' a good horse, sure. The boy's a born devil to ride, an' the tricks he don't know ain't wuth much. You'd better take my order—"

"No old 'Paint' know me better, and is plenty fresh enough. See! there goes the gallant captain with a choice companion for one who will bet only with gentlemen!"

"Injun Dan! the blackest thief unhung! I'd give a hoss to know jest what they're sayin'. Ha! I knowed it! they're goin' to saddle up. Good enough! I reckon I'll take a hand in the mele."

"Then you think—"

"I think not of Mister Injun Dan tries any o' his Injun tricks he'll run aginst a mele."

"I'll be a' laffin' when he does. You never mind him, but just keep an eye on the cap'n."

There was no time to say more, for the signal to begin the game was given. The judge to his cronies, as the signal to begin the game was given.

The two contestants, the scouts, were now in the center of the arena, the judge to his cronies, as the signal to begin the game was given.

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don't want you to get into trouble on my account."

"I don't often cut into 'mother feller's' pie but—you'll just laugh at me as you've done afore—I tell you, pard, it's kind of you to do it! I knowed it the first time I saw you talkin' to him, knowed thar'd be a difficulty; I saw the blood between ye—the heart's blood of one o' ye. I know you don't take no stock in such things; but I've seen 'em proved, time an' ag'in, an' I never read the *medicine* wrong yet! If I—ef I was to ax it as a favor, wouldn't you war this? touching the gayly embroidered pouch upon his breast.

"And leave you defenseless against witches and spooks? No, pard; I know you are in sober earnest, and I thank you, but at the same time you must let me go my own way. Only—I will not take any step toward settlement with this gentleman."

"Good enough! We'll let it go at that. An' now—I reckon you hain't forgot the good old greased style! Brace up, an' show these blue-coats how a true man kin put on the givewine style! Yender she is, a-lookin' straight this-a-way, to see which one o' us is the pirsties!"

Happy Jack glanced toward the pavilion, and a faint flush tinged his cheek as he saw Kate Markham, seated beside her parent, but with her bright eyes unmistakably dwelling upon himself. Acting upon an impulse, he packed several long feathers from the pocket of his coat, then drew them out with a slender curl of hair which he severed from his head with a knife. Then, releasing the cock, he sprang lightly upon the pavilion steps and advanced toward the little group of ladies, uncovering his head as he did so. More than one dainty cheek flushed, and more than one heart fluttered with unvoiced rapidity as the tall, handsome scout paused before them with a low, deep bow that was grace itself, but then Happy Jack bent his knee before Kate Markham and placed the tuft of feathers gently upon her lap.

"Ay! accept it, Kate!" heartily cried Colonel Markham, unheeding the bitter curse that hissed through the grating teeth of the officer beside him. "Tis a compliment you may well be proud of—a trophy gallantly won against such pirsties!"

"And as a token that I do fully appreciate the compliment—though there are many ladies here far more worthy the honor—I beg you to accept this favor, Sir Knight—and may you bear it to victory in whatever you undertake," cried Kate, her rougishly-laughing eyes beholding the mock solemnity of her face, as she took the scarlet ribbon from her hair and pinned it upon the scout's left breast.

"I will uphold it with my life, lady," quietly replied Happy Jack, but there was a steady glow in his eyes which caused the fair cheek to burn and tingle long after the scout had bowed low and quitted the stand.

"Three cheers for the cock o' the walk!" yelled a shrill voice, as Happy Jack sprang lightly to the ground, and a queer-looking figure mounted upon as queen a horse, flung his greasy hat high into the air, and led the wild chorus with an ear-splitting screech that would have shamed the wildest wail of a bagpipe. "Hurray for her—Whoa! ye' or'ny brute—whoa!"

Evidently half-distracted with the uproar—for the band struck up at the same moment—the huge, rawboned brute upon which the stranger had mounted began to prance, back and kick as though desirous of instituting a circus wholly upon its own back.

"Hurry for dog-gone the pesky critter!" whoo! Thar, now—I say! don't somebody want to buy a hoss? Warranted sound as a dollar, an' gentler nor a lamb—no bad tricks! Wall, I ber-durned!" he spluttered, as the animal's heels went up and its master turned a somersault in the air alighting fair and square upon his feet, still holding the reins.

"How are you, lamb?" snickered a soldier.

"That's the way I al'ays git off whenever I'm in a hurry," grinned the stranger. "Now, jest take a squint at the 'ar' glorious animal! Ain't he a pictur' fit for fram'in an' hangin' on the wal' for ye to look at whenever ye feel lonely or downhearted? I tell you, gentlemen, they ain't money enough in this 'ere glorious kentry to buy one side o' that noble critter—no, sir!"

"You traveled in the night, coming here, didn't you, stranger?"

"Part way, yes," was the reply, slightly puzzled.

"I knew it! If you hadn't, the crows d'a' picked you up before you got half-way!"

"I knew a young feller once that tried to make fun o' an old man an' his hoss, an' afore night he tick sick an' died," solemnly said the stranger. "Folks do say he was too darned smart, an' it jest sorter struck in an' he died. But, don't send for the doctor jest yet, young feller; don't reckon you'll go under that way!"

Tall and gaunt, he clung to his horse with no other trace of decay than in his long hair and heavy beard of snow-white hue. His garments were disarrayed; a scarecrow so patched and ragged were they; though the brace of revolvers in his belt, the short, heavy rifle that he bore, were evidently of the finest pattern, and richly ornamented with silver and gold.

"I've seen him afore, somehow," muttered Bill Comstock to his friend, and, low as his tones were, the stranger must have caught them, for he instantly uttered:

"I've bin than more times than you kin count, pard. Take a good, squar' look an' see if you can't place me. No?" as the scout slowly shook his head with a puzzled air. "Sic is life! what's the use o' when a feller's forgotten afore he's remembered? Not a durned bit! But that don't matter, jest now. When's the circus goin' to open up ag'in? I'm in a hurry to git back to the ole women an' children! If any o' you fellers is married you don't want to ax the reason why. Whoa! than—you Pricky Par—whoa! Somebody ketch holt an' hold his hind feet, thar!" squealed the stranger, as his horse began dancing nervously around at the sound of the bugle.

As those who were acquainted with the programme knew, this was the signal for the first contest in shooting—confined to the soldiers with heavy rifles. The target was the ordinary circular one, placed two hundred yards distant, each man having three shots off-hand, for suitable prizes. The competition was of little interest save to those more immediately concerned, and to the stranger, who kept those around him in high spirits by his quaint remarks.

"That war purty fa'r shootin'," he said, pressing into the crowd that surrounded the flushed winner of the first prize. "Purty fa'r shootin', considerin'—"

"Can you do better?" hotly exclaimed the soldier.

"I don't know how it'd be with one o' them things," eying the military rifle curiously. "But, war purty tryin' of it, ef so be the boss'd agree. Jest fer aye, ye know. I couldn't be not nothin', 'cause I b'long to the church-leastways, my old woman done."

"You shall have a trial, my friend," laughed Colonel Markham; "and if you succeed in beatin' Fletcher's score, I'll duplicate the prize he won."

"I don't ax nothin'! I don't win fa'r," bluntly replied the old man, accepting the proffered rifle and striding to the score.

The eager spectators saw that he was not so novice with the rifle, and when his three shots were fired, dozen sped away to fetch the target. The old man looked grimly as a low murmur of wonder ran through the crowd when the result was seen; the three bulletts had completely cut out the center of the target, leaving a triangular hole as perfectly outlined as though drawn with a compass.

"I'd a' putt them all in one, only I knowned some o' you fellers d'swar I missed the hull scoreboard," chuckled the stranger. "Anybody could do that!"

"You don't mean you could do better?"

"Mebbe not—only I do know this: I was hired once at a shot tower fer to make bars o' lead. Powder was plenty, an' they was heaps o' pine logs layin' round loose, so I'd jest go off

a mile or two an' bore them logs chuck-full o' lead bars—puttin' one bullet on top o' 'other on tel they each one weighed jest half a pound. That's all, but I could shoot right peert—now I hain't forgot how to fit."

"You can handle the long bow pretty well, too," dryly remarked Colonel Markham, as he turned away.

Again the bugle sounded a change of programme, and the judge, arising, read aloud the conditions governing the contest for the next prize, which was to be awarded to the man displaying the greatest skill as marksman, with whatever weapon he might select. There was to be no particular target, no set rules governing the competition.

Prominent among the entries were the two scouts and the stranger, and as the interest of all the spectators became centered in 'he doings of these three, the feats of the others may as well be passed over in silence.

Bill Comstock and Happy Jack—the latter mounted upon Simon, a magnificent blood-bay stallion, worth a king's ransom—rode forth upon the level plain where their maneuvers might be unhampered, and separating, began sweeping around in a circle, keeping directly opposite each other, and divided by about fifty yards of space. As in the game of *el gallo*, Happy Jack rode in strict Indian fashion, while Comstock used saddle and bridle. The former bore a stout bow, provided with a quiver of arrows; the latter his revolver, while a small round Indian shield of buffalo-hide was upon his left arm.

At a swift, steady gallop the horses circled around, then Happy Jack suddenly disappeared behind his steed's body. The spectators heard a sharp *twang*, and an arrow flashed from beneath the blood-bay's belly, aimed with deadly force direct at Comstock's heart. One moment later the scout's pistol spoke sharply. As he circled around, facing the crowd, a loud cheer arose as they saw the feathered shaft quivering deep in the hair-stuffed shield. Again and again came the twang of the taut bowstring, answered promptly by the revolver, and even the two drummers seemed to catch the spirit of the wild drama, driving their drums with a wilder and wilder beat.

The arrows were sped oftener and shorter intervals, but the eagle-eyed, steel-nerved scout was equal to the emergency and each time the small shield was interposed, until it fairly bristled with arrows. Now hanging by one arm through the knotted mane, now dangling by one foot, his head almost sweeping the sand, Happy Jack discharged his arrows with a skill that was little short of marvelous; not one of them but would have carried death to his adversary but for the dexterously-managed shield. Then the last arrow was sped, Comstock fired his twelfth bullet, and rising erect the two scouts galloped back to the judge's stand.

Happy Jack passed up his broad-ribbed sombrero in the crown of which could be counted twelve distinct holes. Until now the spectators had fancied Comstock had fired at random, since their movements had been so rapid that no one noticed when Happy Jack would thrust the hat above his horse's back.

"I reckon you fellers 'll hev to 'vise that rifle round atween ye," grinned the old man, heartily adding his congratulations to the rest. "I'm gittin' most too old to play sech tricks as them an' ef I was to try, like enough Pricky Par, then 's I'd st'p up in a circus on his own hook an' spike the h'ad!"

"A game is never lost until it is played out," responded Happy Jack. "You know, I'm as keen as your and your hand to the stand. I took an intense dislike to you at the first sight of your face, and I know that you do not exactly love me. I once I ask another chance. You have a noble horse, and I have another. I challenge you to ride against me this afternoon. If I lose, you may name the forfeit; if I win, I will claim the same right. Do you agree?"

"To ride the race? yes; but I prefer that the stakes be named beforehand," quietly responded Happy Jack. "As you know, I am a simple boy, and the judge is to take both."

"What I ask will not break you," interrupted Stone, with a harsh, forced laugh. "It is a mere fancy of mine—that knot of ribbons upon your bow."

"I thought as much! No, Captain Stone, you haven't wealth enough to stake against this, even though you flung your own life in the battle against it."

"A noble guardian for a lady's favor!" sneered the officer. "The ribbon should have been snow-white, to match the heart it covers!"

"You have said more than enough, Captain Stone," sternly uttered the scout. "Hands are tied here, but repeat those words to-morrow, and I will cram them down your lying throat!"

"You shall have the chance—then it is agreed?" he added, in a changed tone, as he caught sight of Colonel Markham hastening toward the spot. "Colonel, you will be witness? This gentleman and I have agreed to run our horses together to take both."

Colonel Markham glanced inquiringly at Happy Jack, who promptly accepted the situation, and replied:

"Yes, we have agreed to run one mile—around the stake yeonder—and return; his black against Simon."

"I am glad it is no more," was the hearty reply. "I was afraid your hot heads were carryin' you too far. I will act as judge though I am sorry for you, captain. Nothing short of lightning on four feet can touch glorious old Simon."

"And I would rather go afoot the rest of my life, than to ride a horse that owns a superior," laughed Stone.

"Shall it be decided at once, or after the other race?"

"Just as this gentleman prefers," replied the officer.

"It left to me, I say the sooner the better. You know, colonel, that I have been in the saddle for three days past, nor have I closed my eyes since night before last. Naturally I feel somewhat tired and sleepy."

"Very well; get your animals ready. I will postpone the other races for a few minutes."

Happy Jack quickly informed Comstock of all that had passed between himself and the captain, then saddled and bridled his blood-bay, riding over to the judge's stand, where Colonel Markham declared the conditions of the race. The contestants were to run to the post which served as boundary in the game of *el gallo*; they were to turn the post from right to left, then back home, the first comer to possess both the words, both animals dartered away swift as arrows from the bow, stretching out long and low as their sinewy limbs descended the space, eying each other in fiery rivalry, thundering on, with every nerve strained to its utmost tension; but when Simon gradually fell back—until his hot breath found the big black's flank, and Captain Stone turned his head for one swift, backward glance, a sneering smile curled his mustached lip.

Happy Jack uttered a low laugh; he also was content for he knew that the game lay in his own hands. He knew that Simon was the black horse's master, and was too fond of the noble stallion to run the slightest unnecessary risk. He had already seen how unscrupulous the officer was when his evil passions were aroused, and knew well enough to say it would be for the outside rider to crush his adversary against the post in turning around it—an "accident" that could be plausibly explained, where both parties had so much at stake.

"We have the house left, mamma," said the younger daughter, sweet, brown-eyed Marian.

"Yes. But we can't eat the house, nor yet wear it, that I know of," returned Mrs. Chester.

"I'm willing to do anything honest," said Marian.

"You'll have to do something, I suppose," said Uncle Rufus. "How about you, Bell?"

Miss Bell frowned dismally, and answered pettishly:

"I don't know. I wasn't brought up to work."

"Ah, no! We didn't expect this!" sighed Mrs. Chester, again applying her cambric handkerchief to her eyes.

"It has come, however," said Uncle Rufus, dryly. "And must be met somehow. What do you propose, sister Harriet?"

"Ah, I can't propose anything!" sighed Mrs. Chester. "I'm too broken down. My poor girl! I never expected to see them come to this."

"We must take a practical view of the matter, Harriet," quietly returned Uncle Rufus. "I am willing to lend a helping hand in anything you propose."

"Why not take what little we have and start a fancy store! Bell and I could tend it!" cried Marian, eagerly, her bright eyes sparkling with enthusiasm.

"Oh, horrible! A little shopkeeper! I'd die first!" cried Bell, curving her red lips, scornfully.

And Mrs. Chester said:

"Marian, I'm surprised you could think of doing that."

While Uncle Rufus said not a word.

"But we must do something," persisted Marian. "Can't you teach Bell?"

"No!" whined Bell. "I couldn't stand a dirty schoolroom and the horrid, noisy young ones."

"Music, then?" suggested Marian. "You play so well."

"I might take two or three scholars, if they came to me," replied Bell. "I could never go out like a common teacher."

"What do you propose to do yourself, Marian?" said Uncle Rufus, suddenly.

"Anything," was the prompt response. "But I would prefer some situation in the city, there are so many workers here already. Do you

know of anything I could do, uncle? Stay in a store, or a picture gallery, or sew for somebody?"

"If you will allow me. The honor of defeating such an animal is ample reward."

"Give me room—stand aside there," harshly cried Stone, as he wheeled the black and led him a few yards distant.

Then, before any one could divine his purpose, he thrust a revolver against the poor brute's ear, and fired. The horse fell dead, with scarcely a struggle, and Captain Stone strode swiftly to the fort, and disappeared within its gates.

Perhaps it was the wisest move he could make, for many were the not specimens made by the most skillful tacticians of military discipline, and present few of them declared that the nobler brute of the two had suffered a fate far more befitting the other. Then the carcass was dragged away, and the regular races began. Neither of the two scouts entered, but the stranger did, and once more he astonished the natives. His gaunt, big-boned, crooked-limbed horse showed a speed that astonished all, and its ungainly rider exhibited a specimen of jockeying that would have opened the eyes of many a professional rider. There were three heats, over the same course as that ridden by the two men; half a dozen men rode in each heat, and it was arranged that the winners of each heat were to run an extra course, to decide the first, second and third prizes; but this was withdrawn by the stranger taking the three straight heats with apparent ease.

The old man seemed fairly wild with joy, and many were the wonderful tales he told of what Ebenezer, his horse, could do; nor had he concluded when the ladies reappeared, ready mounted for the concluding sport of the day.

Two powerful greyhounds were held in leash, while a couple of soldiers, each bearing a box trap, ran out upon the level plain, pausing some two hundred yards in advance. Each trap contained a full-grown "jack rabbit"—the prairie substitute for a fox.

Kate Markham was mounted upon a clean-faced, fleet little creature, and bewitchingly charming she looked in the saddle. Captain Stone mounted his forlorn-looking gelding, who had acted as the old man's target. The stranger, himself, kept well in the crowd, his horse prancing and plunging like an overgrown colt.

Then the word was given—the traps were sprung; one leaped the "miles," and with the unleashed greyhounds in pursuit, darted away like two white-tailed comets. With a joyous, ringing "view halloo!" the excited riders spurred after, eager to be in at the death.

But not all. The big horse, ridden by the stranger, seemed to have taken a sudden distaste to run, and began to bolt. Happy Jack turned to aid her, when she sprang from the saddle, and hastened toward the maiden. At the same moment the stranger grasped her bridle-rein and urged her horse at right angles to the chase, heading direct for the hills, little more than a half-mile distant. Kate uttered a sharp cry of indignation, but before she could do more, the Indian had knocked her clean from the saddle, and hastened toward the maiden. At the same moment the stranger grasped her bridle-rein and urged her horse at right angles to the chase, heading direct for the hills, little more than a half-mile distant. Kate uttered a sharp cry of indignation, but before she could do more, the Indian had knocked her clean from the saddle, and hastened toward the maiden. At the same moment the stranger grasped her bridle-rein and urged her horse at right angles to the chase, heading direct for the hills, little more than a half-mile distant. Kate uttered a sharp cry of indignation, but before she could

AN IDYL OF THE PAST.

BY WILLIAM TENNYSON HEATON.

The sunset kissed the yellow hill,
In the van of the first star shore,
Twilight shrouded cliff and mill,
And darkened hall and home.

From o'er the wave the vesper bell
Bung forth the hour of prayer—
On the tower the moonlight fell,
And on the stony stair.

The wind swept up the river plain—
A gentle summer breeze—
Grew along the white lame,
And o'er the dewy leas—

Around my heart the shadows fell—
Only a word I said;

But sadder seemed that last farewell—
Than a farewell to the dead!

She indeed could. For, producing a second roll very similar in appearance to the first, he placed a note of like denomination upon each of those Dolores had laid down.

Looking into her wondering eyes, he said:

"This is Colonel Falkner's gift. He pushed the money into my hand when he came to say good-bye."

"I was very glad."

Before she could add another word, the cell-door was opened, and the warden ushered in a small, quiet-looking man who proved to be none other than our old friend, Detective Ferret.

When the warden had withdrawn, and Vincent turned to greet the detective, Dolores placed herself beside him and said, eagerly:

"I intended this as a surprise, my love. I sent for Mr. Ferret, and have secured his services for the mysterious crime for which you suffer may be thoroughly investigated."

"Thank you, Dolores. It was, perhaps, the wisest thing you could have done."

Mr. Ferret quietly helped himself to a chair.

"What defense did you offer at the examination, Mr. Erle?" he said, fixing his light gray eyes upon the young man's face.

"None, except to put in the plea of 'not guilty,' to assure the magistrate and jury that I had left Mr. Challoner's grounds immediately after parting with Dolores, and had set out for Glenoak without a moment's delay."

"What proof did you offer to substantiate your statement?"

"Alas, I had none save my simple word."

The detective appeared to ruminant for some time. At length he said:

"You may tell everything you can remember that has any bearing upon the events of that fatal night."

Vincent and Dolores, together, were enabled to give Mr. Ferret a very clear idea of the events that had already come to light. The two points in which he manifested particular interest, however, were those of Madam Zoe's mysterious disappearance, and the fact that Aunt Jerry had encountered a woman in the corridor when she was hurrying down-stairs after having been aroused by the cries of the murdered man.

"Where are you going?" she demanded, in a curt tone.

"To visit my husband."

Aunt Jerry drew herself up with an angry snort.

"Your husband!" she sneered. "That wretch is no more your husband than I am. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Dolores Glynne."

Dolores bit her lip, and made an effort to pass on; but again she was intercepted.

"Stay where you are, you rebellious child. With my consent, you shall never pass out of that door bound on such a reprehensible errand."

"It is my duty to go," said Dolores, gently but firmly. "Please stand aside."

"Duty!" shrieked Aunt Jerry. "It is your duty to yield obedience to those who are older and wiser than yourself. Go back to the drawing-room, and planted herself directly in the way."

"I protest. My husband expects me; I must go to him."

"I forbid you to go."

"But you have no authority to control my actions. I owe submission to none save my God and my dear husband."

Aunt Jerry trembled with passion.

"Girl, is it your deliberate purpose to defy me?" she raved.

"No, I have no wish to do that," said Dolores, still speaking in a calm and gentle voice, though there was a flush of fire in her brilliant dark eyes. "But you should not usurp authority that does not rightfully belong to you. If you do, I have no resource but to rebel."

There was a silence. Suddenly Aunt Jerry caught hold of the girl's hand—her own was cold as ice—and saying "Come with me," in a dry, hard voice, drew her forward into the drawing-room. All that was mortal of Egbert Challoner lay there waiting for the last salute, which were to be performed at a later hour of that same day. The bier had been posted as long as possible that Raymond might be present and superintend arrangements himself.

Aunt Jerry drew the shrinking girl close up to the coffin, which stood in the middle of the darkened room.

"Look there!" she said, in a raised voice, uncovering the face of the dead. "Look at your poor, murdered grandfather, and then go to the wretch who assassinated him if you have the heart to do it!"

Dolores burst into tears.

"Don't, Aunt Jerry. You shock and distress me. My burden is heavier than I can well bear, already."

Struggling clear of those relentless hands, Dolores hurried back to the hall, and sinking on a chair, gave way to a perfect storm of sorrow.

"You do feel ashamed of yourself—that is evident," said Aunt Jerry, grimly, for she had followed the girl out.

"No, it isn't that. But a trouble like this is so horrid. Sometimes I almost give way. But Vincent is innocent of poor grandpa's death! Did I not believe this from the depths of my soul? I should shrink from him as in great horror as you do."

"Poor deluded fool!"

"I would stake my life on his innocence, and have told him so."

"You intend to cling to him in spite of everything?"

"I do."

"Mad girl! It is a wonder that your murdered relative does not rise out of his coffin to reprove you."

Dolores absolutely wiped away her tears.

"Appearances are very much against my husband," she said, very low. "But that is no reason why I should condemn him. Some day, this mystery will be cleared up, and I shall try to be patient until that time comes."

And before Aunt Jerry could raise another objection, Dolores had quietly stepped past, and left the house.

Like all gentle, loving women, she listened not to the voice of reason, but to that of her heart. In spite of the damning evidence against him, it was still impossible for her to believe Vincent guilty of the heinous crime laid to his charge.

She found him pacing the floor of his cell, pale but calm. He had already had an interview with Mr. North, the attorney who had been secured to defend him, and the man had just gone away with the frank admission that he could possibly be the most difficult one he had ever handled.

At the sight of his wife, however, the prisoner attempted to banish every appearance of concern from his manner and countenance; and embracing her, said cheerfully:

"You come into my cell like a sunbeam, Dolores, only you are much more welcome."

"I have brought you a little package," said Dolores, speaking in a hurried tone, to hide her agitation. "Here it is, and taking a roll of bank-notes from her pocket she spread them on the little table underneath the window."

"Why, where did you get so much money?" Vincent asked, in a tone of surprise.

"It was intrusted to me by our sister Ethelind before she went away, yesterday afternoon. She said this would secure a great many comforts that you might otherwise be compelled to do without. And she wished me to urge upon you the necessity of employing the very best counsel in the State for your defense. Her purpose is at your command."

"Heaven bless her!" cried the poor prisoner, in a tone of deep emotion. "I know she would do anything in the world to help me."

Then, forcing a smile, he added:

"I feel very rich, darling. See, I can dupli-

cate the sum you have brought, note by note."

So indeed he could. For, producing a second roll very similar in appearance to the first, he placed a note of like denomination upon each of those Dolores had laid down.

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"Why, bless you, sir, there were two, that morning, and our customers they were, too. Never opened their heads to speak to a body, if they could help it."

"Men?"

"Four miles."

"Above or below?"

"Below."

Mr. Ferret hurried to the nearest livery-stable and hired a boy to drive him down. Having reached his destination, and found the station-agent, his first question was this:

"Do all the night-train stop here?"

"No, sir. None ever came for her."

"Then my vagrants should no longerastonish you."

"They pain me. Ethelind, deeply pain and grieve me. But you must not remain here."

"Take my arm, and I will lead you back to the house."

She obeyed, submissively as a little child, and another word was spoken until he had drawn her through the open window, and they stood within the little study, when the lamplight fell on her pallid face and burning eyes.

"Now tell me why you were in the grounds?" he said.

"I could not sleep, and felt too nervous to remain in doors," she answered, without looking at him.

"Was it a greater crime for me to seek the fresh air than for you?"

"At least it is scarcely decorous for a young lady to be wandering about at midnight."

"I regret having offended against your notions of propriety," said Ethelind; but her tone was proud and cold.

Colonel Falkner remained silent for a moment, his gray eyes bent fixedly upon the girl's face. Suddenly he heaved a sigh, and said in a changed voice:

"You too, saw that strange woman I was pursuing?"

"I did."

"Who is she?"

"Do you not know?" Ethelind asked, quickly, meeting his gaze now for the first time.

"I have not the slightest suspicion."

"Then I can give you the necessary information."

"It was Mrs. Faunce."

He leaned toward her with a half-suppressed cry of amazement.

"What is she?"

"The very tenant of Lorn!"

sinking of the heart, "to be duped into letting her go! It was all a *ruse* on her part, taking the car. Doubtless she returned to the river as soon as she could, unobserved, and threw herself in! I saw self-murder in her white face. I almost feel as if her death lays at my door."

Evelyn did, indeed, feel terribly agitated in recalling that perhaps if he had passed by watching her, he might have saved a human life. But, it would do no good to brood over the unrecallable. It was to start at noon, on a steamer bound for Havana, and on this his purpose already taken, on his curious errand—like that of some medieval knight—of righting the wrongs of his fair lady.

Surely, his impulse and his purposes were as pure and gallant as those of any plumed knight who ever fought in a maiden's cause. Webster Evelyn might never have taken the fancy of a romantic girl, like one of those graceful heroines of the tournament, as he stepped out of Mr. Dobell's office, buttoning about his tall figure his frayed overcoat; but at heart he was the noblest of noble cavaliers.

He set out in his search with absolutely no clew as to what he sought, except the fact that Cyril Wainwright had married a Cuban lady, in such a year; and had returned on such another year, saying that he was a widower, and bringing with him a little girl of two years, who, he said, was his daughter, and always treated as such until the day of his death; but whom, in his will, he declared not to be his daughter, and so had disinherited her.

It had seemed strange to Mr. Dobell, when he first set out to make inquiries about Mr. Wainwright's early life, that in reality his most intimate friends knew so little on the subject. Everything had been kept secret.

Cyril Wainwright had been an only child; his father had been a highly-respected merchant of the city, and had sent his son, at the age of twenty-three, down to Cuba, to attend to some sugar interests which he had there.

Cyril's nearest friends could only recall, when questioned, that his father had died while the son was in Cuba; that Cyril was said to have married the daughter of a wealthy planter; that he had been called home on the death of his father, and had returned, in deep distress, having also lost his wife, not a month before; and that he brought with him his child little Ethel; and had, from that time, lived quietly in his Philadelphia home, devoted to his daughter, and the memory of his wife who had died in her youth, and for whose sake he had never again married. That when his brother failed in business, and afterward died, he invited his brother's daughter, Myra, to share his home, and be a companion for Ethel.

It was a suspicious point that, on questioning Ethel, she could not reveal her mother's family name, and that there was no record of it among Mr. Wainwright's papers.

Mr. Dobell had been forced to the conclusion that Ethel's appearance on the stage was due to some love-affair in which the young merchant had become entangled with some one far below him in the social scale. Myra, indeed, have even represented the real character of his alliance in order to bring home this child as his own; but, why, in that case he should have brought the child and reared her as his daughter and heiress, puzzled the lawyer.

Of course, he had not betrayed his suspicions to Ethel.

It was this fact that Mr. Wainwright had always treated the girl as his daughter and legal heir, which fastened itself in Evelyn's mind.

He loved that unhappy, disinherited young lady. For the love he bore her, in silence and without return, he had resolved to do all that a sharp, patient lawyer could do, to ascertain what her position really was, and to look for some good cause for an attempt to break the will and restore to her what she had lost.

And so he sailed for Cuba without even the encouragement of feeling that she wished any one to interfere.

When the New Year came in, Evelyn was in Cuba. Coralie Clyde was as completely lost as if she had soared to the sky, and John Garwell, in the desperate necessities of his situation, was devoting himself to a woman whom he despised far more than he loved—Myra Wainwright.

Coralie's flight had placed him in an awkward and uneasy plight. The creditors whom he had silenced with fair promises came about him again like a swarm of wasps. His father, to whom he had confided his trouble, was very angry with him; would not advance ten dollars beyond the sum necessary for his daily wants, and even threatened to turn him out of his house. In this desperate plight he naturally recalled the flattering preference of Miss Myra for himself.

He had fancied sweet little Coralie well enough to be satisfied to compel her to become his wife; but the vain, selfish Myra he had studied and fathomed only to despise. However—something had to be done! Behind him, on New Year's evening at her feet!

Scarcely two weeks since Coralie's disappearance, yet he was already the suitor of another, and wealthy lady!

The first days of the New Year had been a long, miserable day to Ethel. As when we first saw her standing by the window in the first agony of her father's illness, so she stood now for hours—a little back from the view of the hundreds of "callers" who thronged that fashionable street—staring, with strange, bright, feverish eyes at the glittering equipages rolling by. This gay, outside world was so changed to her from what it had been, a year ago!

She knew that John Garwell came often to see Myra. She now knew him as he was—an unprincipled man; but it is almost as hard to root out a dead love as a living one—and to tear the heart from the warm tender human heart gave her many a fierce pang, notwithstanding her respect for him was dead.

John Garwell had opened the one sweet fountain in Myra's spirit; for him it shone clear and full.

The brief wintry afternoon of New Year's day still clings on to the Wainwrights, owing to their country home.

A servant came to call Miss Ethel to the five o'clock dinner. She was cold and pale, and had eaten nothing since breakfast; but she felt as if the sight of the table with Myra at its head would be hateful to her; so she lingered a few minutes where she was; then went slowly down the broad stairs; but, when she reached the main hall it required more firmness than she had left to keep on to the dining-room.

She turned and entered the little boudoir back of the double drawing-rooms. It was dark there, and peaceful. The windows of the boudoir faced the west. Through the parted long silken curtains came the light of a just-risen full moon; whose pale radiance struggled coldly with the warm flush of sunset. Ethel, choking down her tears—longly desolate, sick at heart—slipped in here, went to one of the windows, dropped the heavy curtains behind her, and stood there a long time, in a dream-world illuminated by moonlight—a world once sweet as June, but ghastly and frozen now, like the poor rose-bushes which rattled their icy branch against the pane.

"Alone! alone! Oh, I wish I were dead!" whispered her dry lips, as she lifted her beautiful, pale face—like marble in that silver light—to the far-off heaven.

Poor Ethel! she knew nothing of the one brave, earnest heart which loved her with true manly love that protects, that reveres, that works for its idol. She never gave a thought to the poor young lawyer who was serving her, or trying to serve her, with his best effort.

Absorbed in her own intense emotions, she did not hear or see the entrance of two people into the moonlit boudoir.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 412.)

UNCLE REMUS'S CORN-SHUCKING SONG.

"OH! GO 'WAY, SINDY ANN!"

BY J. C. HARRIS.

Oh, de fus' news you know de day'll be a-breakin' (Hey O! Hi O! Up'n down de Bangol!) An' de flier be a-burnin' an' de ash-ake-a-bakin', (Hey O! Hi O! Up'n down de Bangol!) An' de hen'll be a-hollerin' and de bo's'll be a-wakin' (Hey O! Hi O! Up'n down de Bangol!) Better git up, bigger, an' give'se a-shakin' (Hey O! Miss Sindy Ann!)

CHORUS.

Oh, honey! we see dem ripe stars a-fallin' (Hey O! Hi O! Up'n down de Bangol!) Oh, honey! we hear de rain-crow a-callin' (Hey O! Hi O! Up'n down de Bangol!) Oh, honey! we see dem ripe stars a-fallin' (Hey O! Hi O! Up'n down de Bangol!) Den de daytime's a-comin', a-creepin' an' a-crawlin' (Hey O! Miss Sindy Ann!)

CHORUS.

Per de los' ell-an'-yard is a-huntin' for de mornin', (Hey O! Hi O! Up'n long! go 'way!) An' she'll ketch up widus' fo' we ever git dis corn in (Oh, go 'way, Sindy Ann!)

Oh, honey! we see dem ripe stars a-fallin' (Hey O! Hi O! Up'n down de Bangol!) Oh, honey! we hear de rain-crow a-callin' (Hey O! Hi O! Up'n down de Bangol!) Oh, honey! we see dem ripe stars a-fallin' (Hey O! Hi O! Up'n down de Bangol!) Den the daytime's a-comin', a-creepin' an' a-crawlin' (Hey O! Miss Sindy Ann!)

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THE SATURDAY JOURNAL

7

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SURVEYORS' CAMP.

"Yes, Kitse," said Old Arkansaw, as he and Kit Bandy made their way back from the river into the woods, "that wife o' yours is a treasure—a genius. What woman ever born'd a' thought of makin' a canoe of her ambrilla, and sailin' out across a roarin' river?"

"Oh, yes; she's a jewel in your eye, Arkansaw, but if you'd a' had a red-hot skillet flapped over your head or a tater-masher driven into your diogyony as often as I have, you couldn't see anything smart in the old catapult that done the violence. Oh, I honestly wish the Inglin'd skulper her, dash her old picters; but instead o' that she's actly bein' pomped up and courted by the old boys, like the White Crane. He's even promised her the position of queen if she'd give up the white people entirely! 'Perty! what a queen she'd make! Knock the socks off the Queen Victory of France. She's a doctor, and that's what makes the Inglin like her. She really does know somethin' bout pills and sickies and has brought more'n one buck Inglin out o' the kinks a-flyin'. Oh! she's a sort of a goddess, and a free character 'mong them, and's haydoogins of friends. But she can't stand it always. She'll flap her heel ag'in the bucket some of these days, and then she'll call on Peter at the gates o' Paradise."

"Ah! you think she'll be an angel, do you?"

"She'll go through if she takes a notion in spite of the doo-keeper's club. She's a will o' her own, has Sabina, and alers makes a way; and I reckon she'lloller me upon earth and off."

"If she follows you, Kitse, after you leave this brimstone, she'll catch blue-blazes, like maddened tigers.

"She'lloller if she takes a notion, brimstone or no brimstone; but mebby the devil and I both can head her off. But lookee here, Arky, suppose you and me visit the surveying party's camp and see what they're doing. Somethin' or other I can't reconcile myself to. Surveyor Braash and Scientific Daymon. Thar's plenty of royal ole cussedness crappin' out of their eyes; but, arter all, everybody arn't villains because they're not as handsome and lovely and sweet-spirited as you and me, Arky. Do you know that?"

"That's so, Kitse; but that's Silver Star, who we must look arter, too; and, also, that dasted young feller with the sparryhawk cap and feather jacket. He's got that gal Elwe, 'bout which Silver Star talked so much; and, for some reason or other, he's threatened the life of the Boy Knight. I've an idea sneakin' under my skulp, Kit, that that Sparryhawk's not the clear quill."

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Thus conversing the two old bordermen pushed on through the forest in the direction of the surveyors' camp, and in the course of a few hours they came in sight of the place. It was located in a natural defensive position, and commanded a view in all directions. It was situated upon a high hill or knoll sloping off in all directions. The sides of this knoll were barren of vegetation, smooth and covered with a sandy soil; but upon its crest grew a little clump of trees and in among these the surveyors had pitched their camp.

Without any hesitation Old Arkansaw and Kit Bandy ascended the hill and entered the camp where they were met by Surveyor Braash and his men.

The scouts took in the camp at a glance. There were about fifteen men of different nationalities, and some of forbidding looks, in the party. All were armed to the teeth and looked as though they would as soon fight as eat. A wagon of the heavy military pattern, four draught mules and some twenty fine-looking saddle-horses and equipments comprised their outfit. As evidence of their business, there lay at one side a surveyor's staff, a compass, a theodolite, a Gunter's chain and pins, a flag-pole and other things pertaining to a first-class outfit of a surveying party.

"I am glad to meet you again, gentlemen," said Herman Braash, "and hope you will accept of the hospitality of our camp as long as you feel so disposed."

"Thank you, strangers," replied Bandy; "we're great guns for fun and good eatin'. We may, and we may not stay here awhile with you, but I'll be with you."

"I thank you, gentlemen," said Professor Daymon, "to secure the assistance of one of you a few minutes in helping me make up the topography of this country. Whichever is the best acquainted with this vicinity will please step into my tent."

Kit Bandy motioned to Arkansaw to go with him, so the old scout followed him into the tent. The first thing the professor did was to take from an innocent-looking camp-chest a bottle of liquor and a small goblet and invite Arkansaw to drink. The old man touched the liquor lightly, and Daymon, after drinking himself, took a small, portable secretary from his chest and opening it drew a well-executed map of the White Earth river country therefrom. This he spread out before Arkansaw, and then said:

"I presume you can read and write, can you, Arkansaw?"

"Sorry to say, professor, that I don't know 'B' from 'A' for that. I used to have a hang of the letters, but as it alers seemed a waste of the raw material to be thinkin' 'em over, I let 'em alone and filled up my noggin with some good, useful reseats for burns, curin' pelties and such."

"Well, I don't know as the want of a knowin' of the alphabet will binder you giving me just as much information as though you had the learning of Humboldt. This map, now, embraces this country so far as the geographical dimensions are concerned; but many of the prominent features of the region are not indicated by location, and as we have to make a complete report, even to minute details, we must have the information to make it upon. To travel the country over would require much time and labor, and so we decided to call some one already acquainted with the lay of the land, as the saying goes."

"Yes, yes," said Arkansaw, gazing upon the map; "but what river's that, professor?" he said, pointing to a red line running north and south across the map.

"That's not a river, but an isothermal line. Arkansaw," explained the professor, smiling at the old man's childlike ignorance; "but now, let me convenience at the Sioux village and follow east down the river; what are the general features of the country?"

"Wal, professor, I'm not very handy in makin' g'ography, but I'll tackle it best I know how. After leavin' the Si-ox village the country, for a ways, is level and lightly timbered, but after it gits into the vicinity of the Spirit Swamp it's tumbled up 'wuss than a trundled bed, and kivered with stunted pines and grubs, till ye can't rest. Then comes the Spirit Swamp—a nasty dismal hole; put her down, professor. That's more'n five hundred acres of it, and nothing in' but deads and willers, and frogs grow and ripen there."

"Is it accessible by foot or by canoe?" asked the professor.

"They say it's navi-gate-able for canoes, tho' I can't say as enough for g'ography. You see the swamp buckles up against the north side of the river, and it's put it down, professor; and a canoe could enter it from the White Earth. But as it's said to be the abode of spirits and goblins, put it down, professor, that Old Arkansaw Abe, who's not afraid to face death and destruction, could not be hired to enter it in broad day-light."

"Then you have never explored the swamp?" asked Daymon.

"Explored it! Heavens. I'd as soon think of explorin' purgatory. Why, perfesser, when I was along the river when the Spirit buckles on to her, she'd cold and chokish. It seems as though the wind was always blowin' the swamp, and such a roar as them reeds make—why, I swar it would make the hair raise on a dead nigger's head. Oh! a dastard heart will be the Spirit Swamp; put her down, professor."

For fully an hour Arkansaw continued his description of the country, and when Daymon had obtained all the information of this character desired, he turned the conversation upon other topics. The weather, the hunting the Indians—all were fully discussed; and finally Daymon had remained, incidentally:

"We were all wonderfully worked up the other night, when encamped south of here, by the appearance of a dark spot against the clear sky. Many were the conjectures as to what it was, but none was right, for it proved to be a balloon. It was going north, and appeared to be settling toward the earth; but what became of it I know not."

"That was the night of the twenty-first, 'pon my soul!" asked Old Arkansaw.

"Let me see," said the professor, reflectively.

"I believe it was—yes, it was the night of the twenty-first; I remember now. Did you see it?"

"No, but Silver Star, the Boy Knight of the Peraro, did; and that's not all. The balloon was mighty down when he seed it, and he heard the ballooners quarrelin' like man and wife 'mong themselves 'bout somethin', and presently he saw a bundle let down from the balloon with a rope. Then up went the air-boat, and the felers began to quarrel ag'in, and presently the boy saw somethin'—well, it was a man—through the air, and strikin' the ground, was mashed into a lump of red liver. And that, brother, perfesser, turned out to be the sweetest little gal—so Silver Star said—you ever see'd."

"Good heavens! do you believe it, Arkansaw?"

"Yes; Silver wouldn't lie."

"What became of the girl?"

"Well, Silver took charge of her—put her on his horse and started to the fort; but the Inglin got after 'em and he sent her on to the fort, and he dodged off afoot. But alas! the horse come through all hunkie, but that was no gal on his back."

"You don't tell!" exclaimed the professor; "then Silver Star doesn't know anything about her?"

"No, I know he don't."

"Do you have any idea where she is, Arkansaw?"

"If you can find the den of one Sparryhawk, a young trapper, or hunter or somethin', I tell you'll find the gal there. I heard him tell a person so."

At this juncture Arkansaw caught the eye of Kit Bandy, who was standing near, and who gave the scout a look that expressed more words could have done. However, to get around an abrupt break in his honest revelation of facts, he went right on.

"But that Sparryhawk is a crazy loon that imagines himself lord of creation and cock o' the woods, but the Inglin's that gal Elwe, 'bout which Silver Star talked so much; and, for some reason or other, he's threatened the life of the Boy Knight. I've an idea sneakin' under my skulp, Kit, that that Sparryhawk's not the clear quill."

"D'y'e think so, Arkansaw? Why? State yer reason, will ye?"

"On account o' his mysterious comin' and goin'. Now, you know he's dased a dased 'bout where he belongs; and I've heard it loundly hinted that he's the leader o' a gang o' robbers, and that his handle is Osman, the Outlaw!"

"Great horn that pulled old Jericho! D'y'e think that's a shudder of truth in it, Arky?"

"Couldn't swear that that is, but my own suspicion's what hinted it to me. A mule's heel's not always stationary when the mule's asleep, Kit Bandy; so keep that in your pipe."

"That's so, Kitse; but that's Silver Star, who we must look arter, too; and, also, that dasted young feller with the sparryhawk cap and feather jacket. He's got that gal Elwe, 'bout which Silver Star talked so much; and, for some reason or other, he's threatened the life of the Boy Knight. I've an idea sneakin' under my skulp, Kit, that that Sparryhawk's not the clear quill."

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THAT EARLY MUSTACHE.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

What tongue can tell the joys that fill
The heart of young Tom Dash
When 'neath his nose the first fuzz shows
Foraging a mustache!

He's prouder than the richest man
Could be with heaps of cash
Over that brown first streak of down—
That ghost of a mustache!

Some day the girls will praise its curvies.
Oh, frost, be not too rash,
And touch one hair of promise there
And spoil that dear mustache!

A looking-glass he cannot pass,
Even though there'd be a crash,
For light and dark he looks to mark
The growth of that mustache!

How very slow it seems to grow!
And should I call it trash,
Or speak of with touch of wit,
The light for that mustache?

Ask if that's dirt, and he'll feel hurt.
And both his eyes will flash
The yield, indeed, shows but scant seed
Planted for that mustache.

He drinks cold tea for fear that he
Might scald and bring to smash
That little crop upon his lip.
He calls "his dear mustache."

He longs to see the time when he
Can twist it in a lash
And lay it there across his ear—
The prided, loved mustache!

It never lacks for brush and wax,
For this he spends some cash,
But horrors, oh, how very slow
That fungus-like mustache.

Pride of his heart is the barber's art
Is now mocked by Dr. Dandy
To private and irate
That fungus-like mustache.

The bachelories and puts on oils—
Dyes warranted to wash
And with many an ointment doth anoint
That delicate mustache.

And though this youth, in very truth,
Is large from eating hash,
Tis plain to see how much is he
Wrapped up in that mustache!

Post and Plain;

OR,

Rifle and Revolver in the Buffalo Range.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ.

HOW TO SHOOT A PISTOL.

WHEN we stepped outside on the parade-ground of the fort we found that the snow had ceased, while the wind was blowing from a different quarter. The heavy gray clouds were scudding across the sky, low down, and the western horizon showed some patches of blue.

"We shall have a regular nipper-to-morrow," announced Bullard. "A north-west wind on the plains is no joke," tell you. The thermometer will be down to ten below zero, at least. Later in the season it will sink to forty."

"And how do you manage to keep warm?" asked Moore.

"Oh, it never blows hard when we're down for forty. I'd sooner have a still day with forty degrees than a north-wester with ten. It doesn't cut you to the bone. However, we'll not borrow trouble if we can help it."

We passed across the parade-ground, which was now dotted with figures. The men were coming out of their quarters and beginning to snowball each other, while officers were strolling from one house to another. We noticed that in the garrison every one wore some sort of uniform, and that the blue great-coats were universal.

We made our way toward the stables, along a path which had already been made by the garrison snow-plows. On the way we passed several officers, and in each case we had to stop and be introduced all round, a ceremony conducted with a great deal of bowing and hand-lifting, for officers of the army are above all things polite. Two or three joined us when they heard where we were going, and we soon reached the garrison practice-ground.

This lay in rear of the long rows of stalls that composed the cavalry stables, and it proved to be a corral which had lately been occupied by the cattle and horses. Bruce told us it was the encamping-ground for the morning gallop of the horses.

It had been agreed beforehand that Captain Bullard, who had the reputation of being the best pistol-shot in the garrison, was to instruct those of us who were deficient, and Miles-Bruce's orderly—followed us with a heavy box of ammunition.

"Now, gentlemen," said the captain, as we stopped before board target about six feet square, "I suppose you all know that there are two distinct ways of shooting. We do the one with a big pistol and a long cartridge, anywhere from fifty to a hundred and fifty yards, and it's just the same as rifle-work. You have to bring your sights on a line and hold them there, being careful not to pull off. Miles, go and nail up a target."

Miles went to the board fence and nailed up a paper target just like those we had used at Littleton for shot-gun practice.

"Now, gentlemen, fire away," ordered Bullard. "One shot apiece; and I'll be a dollar no one makes a bull's-eye at fifty yards."

This proved quite correct. The two-inch circle of black which formed the bull's-eye was nothing but a black speck at fifty yards.

Moore was the first to fire, taking slow, deliberate aim at arm's length. Miles, who stood near the target in a pit, put out a long pointer and marked the shot in the paper, just at the top edge.

Charley Green followed, and got on the target a little nearer. Old Mart then advanced and put in a bullet within some three inches of the bull, and the rest of us had about the same luck, all on the target, but none nearer the bull than four or six inches, while most of us were at the edge of the paper.

Then Bullard began to speak:

"You see, gentlemen, yonder is a two-foot target, covering more space than the vitals of any man in this camp. If you can't hit it every time, you can't drop a man except by a chance shot. I notice you all shoot the same way, at arm's length. That's all very well for quick shots at short range, but it won't do for accuracy. Look here."

He was standing with his left side toward the target as he spoke, the pistol dangling loosely in his right. We heard the click of the locks, and the next moment Bullard threw up his left elbow as high as his face, resting the thumb and fingers of his open left hand on his breast. Up came his pistol hand, and the barrel of the weapon rested on the raised elbow of the marksman. Hardly taking any aim he fired, and Miles's pointer came out of the pit and rested just under his eye.

"I didn't expect to hit the bull that time," said Bullard. "I was only showing you how to aim quickly and accurately. You see it took me less than three seconds to fire, and I came nearer the bull than any of you gentlemen, who aimed slowly and deliberately. Some of you took nearly half a minute to fire. You can shoot as well as I can, if you will just alter your position; that's all. Now, Mr. Moore, you take a shot. Observe me again, and then try. I raise the left elbow and put the fingers on the breast bone. That gives a hard rest with no pulse to disturb the aim. Hold your breath when you fire. You will find your front sight almost in the mark. Aim correctly. See?"

As he spoke, he fired; and Miles showed the white disk over the bull's-eye for the first time that day.

"That's the whole secret of accurate shooting

with the pistol at long range," said Bullard. "Treat it as a rifle, and get all the rest you can."

We very soon found the benefit of his advice, and our shots began to cluster round the bull's-eye in close proximity. Jack Moore and Old Mart, who were both good rifle-shots already, as we knew, made bull's-eyes, and the greenest of us found very little trouble in sighting correctly over the rest made by the left elbow. Before another round could be fired it became necessary to change the target, as the holes could no longer be distinguished apart. By the time it was dark we had satisfied ourselves that we could shoot straight with a pistol, and went back to our quarters with great content.

Bullard had promised to show us what he meant by "quick shooting," that evening, and invited our party into the cellar of his quarters for the purpose.

"These heavy cartridges," he explained, "go

strong, and send a bullet so far, that it's not

safe to practice above ground, unless there's a

dead plain and no people behind the target, or

else a bank to hold the balls. I've got a target

made with a face as smooth as Ruth's own; but he

wrote verses that made Ruth cry, and the head

that he sketched of her was 'just lovely.'

Opposite them Will Hurst did damage to the

target, "struck by a bullet."

Sam had the provincial capriciousness of

temper; but there was a steadiness in Will's

gaze, when he chose to be serious, which made

his stand just the least bit in awe of his dis-

pleasure, though she had never seen him man-

ifest anger.

Every body predicted that Will would some

day develop into a "solid man" in business cir-

cles. This, and the fact that he had the only

full-grown mustache in the party, may have

made him attractive in the girl's eyes, though

they had as yet been no love-passages between

them.

Last came Ned Sawyer and the tall and rather

stately Lou Barton.

Ned was in a build, with small hands and

feet, light hair, light blue-gray eyes, and micro-

scopic mustache; he played the piano with

spirit, sung in a tenor voice, and waltzed divinely.

It was probably his *elegance* that attracted

the girl. On his side, he liked Lou because she

was by odds the most stylish girl the village

could boast.

Any other of the village swains would have

thought twice before catching this rather

haughty young lady off her feet; but Ned, with

a *young lady's* man's self-complacency, argued

that if she ("or any of her folks") took offense,

he had but to take his pick among the other

village belles; they would all be glad enough to

see him get the girl.

"But what if the pistol shoots over?" queried

Charley Green.

"It will not 'shoot over,' as you call it. You

are not to look at the sights at all."

"Then what are we to do?"

"I'll show you. In the first place, remember

that this practice is for firing rapidly from a

galloping horse at a galloping buffalo. You've

no time to look at sights, and could not keep

them steady if you had. You must point the

pistol so that your barrel goes straight at the

target. You can point your finger or a stick at

anything, straight enough. Nothing will teach

you but practice. See? I always use one pistol;

I know the grip of it. Observe."

They were near the center of the lake, the furthest shore at least four miles distant, the furthest not less than or ten, when Sam Gardner asked.

"Isn't it getting rather dark? Hallo! it has

clouded over!"

All looked up. The sky was a dull-gray pall of continuous cloud.

"Shouldn't it be if we had snow?" ventured Ned Sawyer. "It will spoil all the skating. That's pleasant!"

Even as he spoke, white flakes came fluttering down, then another, and another, until the air was full of the feathered crystals.

"Hurrah!" he repeated to the others, who had

now come up with him. "There's the shore, within a rod of where we stand. Look up! Do you see that overhanging tree? There's not two like that on the shores of the lake. Within a stone throw over that bank are waiting us a red-hot fire and all the cider we can drink, to say nothing of such a welcome as only old Tim Waterhouse and his hearty old dame can give!"

All looked. The bank was hidden by snow so as to be indistinguishable, but overhead the outlines of a scraggy oak could be faintly traced, as it swayed through the gathering gloom, amid the falling snow.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted Tom again.

"I have found present safety and happiness for life at the same time. Bear witness all, that this lady promises that if we come safely through this adventure, she will marry me on the first day of May!"

"Yes, Tom," laughed Nannie, fairly jumping up and down with fun, "but I didn't say what year! It may not be before the next Centennial!"

Xina.

ready to work like a hero, if somebody else would only lead. Ned was—rather helpless.

Ruth showed resignation; Sadie fretful hopelessness; Lou resoluteness; Nannie—she trusted in Tom.

"Let Sadie and Ruth ride first," said Lou, taking the arm of her escort, who now yielded to her direction.

"We'll get up well," cautioned Tom, and started forward with Nannie at his side.

"Midget," he said to her, "I'd carry you, if I had a robe to wrap you up in; but without it you can only keep your blood in circulation by walking."

"You're always good, Tom," she replied, pressing his arm; and after a pause: "Tom, we may not live to see another day together."

"Tut! tut!" began Tom; but she interrupted him.

"It is true, isn't it?"

"There is such a possibility, certainly. I suppose I may as well admit it."

"Tom, I want to tell you something. I may never have another opportunity. Stoop down."

He complied.

Suddenly raising on tiptoe she kissed him on the lips.

"There, Tom," she said, "I want to tell you with my own lips, before I have lost the power, that though I have teased you so mercilessly, I have loved you all along. Oh, Tom! I have slept with your picture at my lips, and wakened in the night and found myself sobbing with sheer happiness at the thought that you loved me best in all the world. I wish I had told you this long ago, Tom, and made you happy during the time I have wasted in tormenting you."

"Why, you dear girl," murmured Tom, with tears in his eyes, "you have made me the happiest fellow in the world for over a year."

"Not always, when I have seen pain in your eyes sometimes, when I have grieved you. Oh! if I had been kept in such uncertainty for a year, I know I should have died!"

"Of course I always knew that you must really love me; but I confess that it is a little more satisfying to hear you say so," admitted honest Tom.

A new phase in the character of his lady-love was now disclosed to him. Who would have believed that so much tenderness lay hidden beneath such levity?

Suddenly Tom stopped with a suppressed cry.

"What is it, Tom?" asked Nannie.

"Midget," said Tom, in a strange voice, "if we get out of this will you marry me?"

"Oh! how can you ask such a question on the very brink of the grave, maybe?"

"It is," he said, "but I have kept you in suspense for a long time."

"Honor bright, you will marry me on the first day of May?"

"Yes, Tom, if you wish it. But how strangely you talk."

"Hurrah!" yelled Tom, and caught her up and sealed the bargain on her lips in a twinkling.

"Hurrah!" he repeated to the others, who had

now come up with him. "There's the shore, within a rod of where we stand. Look up! Do you see that overhanging tree? There's not two like that on the shores of